Italy: Sicily, the Noto Valley & Syracuse

Pre-Trip-Extension - Taormina Pre-Trip Extension

2 Nights from $545.00 per person, double occupancy

- 2 nights at Hotel Monte Tauro
- Airport car service for arrival
- Full-day excursion with a local guide on Mount Etna
- Private tour of Taormina with a local guide
- Hospitality desk
- Daily breakfast
- City information

Only available with the Air Inclusive Package.

FLIGHT DAY: Depart from the United States or Canada

Your vacation is about to begin! Spend your first night aloft and arrive ready for an unforgettable trip.

ARRIVAL DAY: Arrive in Catania / Travel to Taormina / Begin your Pre-Trip Extension

A VBT representative will greet you at the Catania airport to start your adventure off right. A complimentary car service will whisk you to your centrally located hotel in Taormina. From here, you are perfectly positioned to explore this charming city at your leisure.

DAY 1: Guided walk of Taormina

At 9:30 a.m., our VBT representative will be in the hotel lobby to answer any questions and help you organize your time here. Then, enjoy a walking orientation tour through the historic center of Taormina. You'll explore the main street which is full of historic landmarks, and browse the shops and cafés on Corso Umberto, the city's pedestrian-only thoroughfare with its many baroque and gothic churches and palaces. Other attractions include the Piazza Duomo, beloved by such artists as Oscar Wilde, Alexander Dumas, and Richard Wagner and Piazza IX Aprile, a terrace-like square overlooking Mount Etna and the bay. This easy city walk takes about two hours.

If you're hungry for more, visit the Greek Theatre and then walk up to the Castello Saraceno. Take the funicular down to Mazzaro beach for a swim in the Mediterranean or simply relax at our hotel's magnificent swimming pool with its stunning views.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 2: Independent exploration of Taormina / Excursion to Mount Etna

This morning, put on your hiking boots, dress in layers, and be ready for a truly unique hike on Mount Etna. Your small group will meet your guide, an expert in volcanology and art history, at the hotel at 8:00 a.m. and shuttle to the base of the volcano. Based on the weather, your guide will determine the best starting point for your walk, but you can expect to hike at approximately 6,000 ft. (1,829 m) on unpaved terrain covered with ash and rocks. You'll explore lava fields, hike around lateral craters, and walk inside a lava tunnel. There will be plenty of rest breaks and time for lunch on your own. You will have the option to taste honeys, creams and liqueurs, as well as delicious dishes from the local cuisine, at a typical mountain 'rifugio' at lunch time. Your excursion will conclude with a visit to the basalt column formations of the famous Alcantara gorges and you'll return to Taormina around 5:00 or 5:30 p.m.

You do not need to be an expert hiker for this excursion but it is important to have appropriate clothing and footwear and maybe bring a second pair of socks, in case they get wet in the gorges. In the event of bad weather conditions (most likely in March and April, when snow may prevent hiking at that altitude), you will remain at a lower altitude and visit the Alcantara gorges.

Included Meals: Breakfast